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HOUSE PASSES SATELLITE BILL
BURR CONCERN ADDRESSED IN LEGISLATION

BILL PROVIDES LOCAL BROADCAST RELIEF TO NORTH CAROLINA SATELLITE OWNERS

WASHINGTON, D.C.- - Fifth District Representative Burr's handiwork was seen on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives today. By a vote of 422-1, the House approved H.R. 1554, the "Satellite Copyright, Competition, and Consumer Protection Act," which included provisions similar to those of a bill introduced by Rep. Burr allowing satellite companies to provide local network broadcasts to its local viewers. H.R. 1554 addresses satellite law on a comprehensive level, with a portion of the bill dedicated specifically to satellite programming. Burr has been advocating these changes in satellite law since 1997 when he first introduced legislation to remedy the concerns of North Carolina satellite viewers and broadcasters.

"Today, we proved our commitment to satellite viewers across the country. I have been working to pass satellite legislation for two years and it's great to see Congress finally act on it. Not only did we modernize satellite law today, but we also passed a bill that puts common sense into satellite programming. The House legislation makes it possible for local people to watch their local stations," Burr said.

Over the last several months, North Carolina satellite viewers have been vocal about the need to continue receiving network broadcasts through satellites. The issue of network broadcasts availability to satellite viewers surfaced when two broadcast networks filed lawsuits against satellite companies in 1998 claiming that some satellite company programming was illegally packaged and sold to satellite viewers. A federal judge in Miami agreed that the network broadcast had been sold illegally and enforced a ruling that these network broadcasts were to be terminated. As a result, 700,000 satellite viewers lost CBS and FOX broadcasts on February 28. Another 1.5 million satellite viewers were scheduled to lose ABC network programming on April 30. According to the National Association of Broadcasters and DirecTV, a recent agreement between the broadcasters and satellite television providers delays the court enforced ruling that the networks be cut off, with the new shut off deadline set for June 30.

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"Passing this bill may not be the quick fix that some people have hoped for, but it is a long-term solution. It allows local broadcast stations to expand their audience, it gives satellites viewers the ability to watch their local television stations, and it modernizes federal laws to keep up with technological advances," Burr said.

The comprehensive legislation addresses several other key satellite issues in addition to local satellite programming availability. The bill also directs the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to redesign the model used to determine which viewers can receive broadcasts through an antenna and to determine if the standard by which the FCC classifies second-grade (Grade B) broadcast signals should be updated to account for more viewers.

Although the bill has been approved by the House, it must now be considered by the U.S. Senate before it can be sent to the President to be signed into law.

The title of Burr's legislation is **H.R. 89**, the "**Satellite Access to Local Stations Act (S.A.L.S.A.)**" and has a bipartisan list of 59 cosponsors. The full text of this legislation can be viewed on the world wide web at:

<http://www.house.gov/burr/>

Burr serves on the House Commerce Committee, which has jurisdiction over the issue of commercial satellite communications.